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BY

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In-Doors.

"A BOOK ABOUT THE BABY."

IF I could write such a book for you,
What a pretty book it would be! —
And the prettiest things they would all be true.
——But *can* I? Ah, you shall see.

So, the book about Baby must all be new? —
No, not one word of it old?
Well, then — why, the Baby's two eyes they are blue,
And the Baby's one head it is gold.

And the Baby has such a red bud of a mouth,
Such a beautiful bit of a nose;
And where can you find in the North or the South
Such queer little pigs as his toes?



Oh, the Baby is better than blossoms or birds —

"Or than honey or oranges?" Yes.

And the Baby tells tales with the darlingest words,
That mean — what you never can guess!

Ah, the Baby believes he's an angel, no doubt,
And wants to go back to the sky; —
Yes, that is just what all the trouble's about,
And that is just why he *will* cry!

And the Baby is sweet — from the light on his head
To the dimples that play in his feet.
Now, my book is all new, for who ever has said,
Before, that — the Baby is sweet?

WHEN IT RAINS.

DO? — like the things in the garden. Oh!
Just keep quiet a while and grow.

Do? — like the bird. It shuts its wings
And waits for the sun? Do you hear? — it sings!

Do? — like the lilies. Let it beat,
Nestle below it — and be sweet.

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE.

THIS is the Master, who but he? —
(Where did you think to find him?) —
Here in the cradle. Come and see.
—— Why, surely we *have* to mind him!

Wait; you must be as still as death;
He is sleeping now so sweetly.
One hasn't the right to draw one's breath
Till he is awake completely.

Should he want the wedding-ring from her hand,
(No matter if he would lose it)
There is not a lady in all the land
Could have the heart to refuse it.

Should he choose to reach for a crown, I say,
(It is gold and he could not break it)
Why, is there a king in the world to-day
Who would not let him take it?

What Cardinal would not lend him his hat,
To give him a minute's pleasure?
And where is the good, gray beard, as to that,
Which he could not pull at leisure?

But, here he is! — do you see his eyes?
Now what do you want? It may be
He will hear you, after his first surprise,
—— There's nothing you want of the Baby!

But everything is his, you know,
(And no matter whose the rest is!)
From the blue little bird that chirps so low
To the oak-tree where its nest is!

It is only *work* that you want, indeed ?
Could you do the work of twenty,
The baby will give you all you need ;
Ask him : he has work in plenty !

INTO THE WORLD AND OUT.

INTO the world he looked with sweet surprise.
The children laughed so when they saw his eyes.

Into the world a rosy hand in doubt
He reached; — a pale hand took one rose-bud out.

"And that was all? — Quite all?" No, surely. . . But
The children cried so when his eyes were shut.

"I WANT IT YESTERDAY."

COME, take the flower, — it is not dead ;
'Twas kept in dew the whole night through."
"I will not have it now," he said :
I want it yesterday, I do."

"It is as red, it is as sweet" —
With angry tears he turned away,
Then flung it fiercely at his feet,
And said, "I want it — yesterday ! "

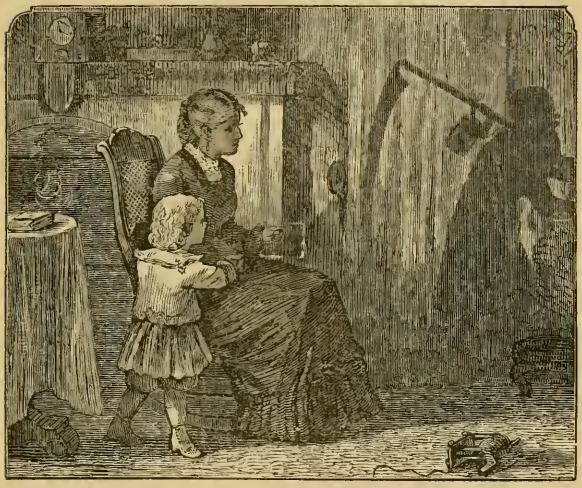
ABOUT A MAGICIAN.

OH, there is a magician that I know,
As strange as Hermann is —— "But *he* can wring
A white bird's neck off in the market, though,
Then — put it on and tell the bird to sing,
And fly like anything !

"What can *he* do ?" Just wait and watch him pass,
And you shall see, I think, what you shall see.
The pretty baby, creeping in the grass,
Will be a naughty boy, and climb a tree,
If he goes by — ah me !

Why, men and women in his path shall rise ——

Yes, of the dust, or nothing, they are made.



We see them in the sun with real eyes,

And, while we look at them, he makes them fade

To ghosts —— You are afraid?

Then, he can pass the guards in any light,

And take the palace and the king away.

He has not gone to sleep a single night
For many million years — some people say —
Nor rested for a day!

We cannot kill him — though we sometimes try;
He kills us all —— Yes, and the soldiers, too!
Seas are not deep enough to drown him. I
Have heard that fire is — what he passes through.
Look! he is changing you!

Why, in a little while you will not be
Yourself. And then —— What will he change
you to,
Poor, yellow-headed child, here at my knee
Waiting to hear a foolish story through?
Ah, Fred, what if we knew!

THE LITTLE BOY I DREAMED ABOUT.

THIS is the only world I know —
It is in this same world, no doubt.
Ah me! but I could love him so,
If I could only find him out —
The Little Boy I dreamed about!

This Little Boy who never takes
The prettiest orange he can see,
The reddest apple, all the cakes
(When there are twice enough for three) —
Where can the darling ever be?

He does not tease and storm and pout
To climb the roof, in rain or sun,
And pull the pigeon's feathers out
To see how it will look with none,
Or fight the hornets — one to one!

He does not hide, and cut his hair,
And wind the watches wrong, and cry
To throw the kitten down the stair
To see how often it can die.
(It's strange that you can wonder why!)

He never wakes too late to know
A bird is singing near his bed;
He tells the tired moon: "You may go
To sleep yourself." *He* never said,
When told to do a thing: "Tell Fred!"

If I say "Go," *he* will not stay
To lose his hat, or break a toy,

Then hurry like the wind away,
And whistle like the wind for joy,
To please himself — this Little Boy.

Let any stranger come who can,
He will not say — if it *is* true —
"Old Lady" (or "Old Gentleman")
"I wish you would go home, I do;
I think my mamma wants you to!"

—— No, Fairy-land is far and dim:
He does not play in silver sand;
But if I could believe in him
I could believe in Fairy-land,
Because — you do not understand.

Dead? — dead? Somehow I do not know.
The sweetest children die. We may
Miss some poor foot-print from the snow,

That was his very own to-day ——
"God's will" is what the Christians say.

Like you, or you, or you can be,
When you are good, he looks, no doubt.
I 'd give — the goldenest star I see
In all the dark, to find him out,
The Little Boy I dreamed about!

MY GHOST.

[A STORY TOLD TO MY LITTLE COUSIN KATE.]

YES, Katie, I think you are very sweet,
Now that the tangles are out of your hair,
And you sing as well as the birds you meet,
That are playing, like you, in the blossoms there.
But now you are coming to kiss me, you say:
Well, what is it for? Shall I tie your shoe,
Or loop your sleeve in a prettier way?
"Do I know about ghosts?" Indeed I do.

"Have I seen one?" Yes: last evening, you know,
We were taking a walk that you had to miss,

(I think you were naughty and cried to go,
But, surely, you 'll stay at home after this !)
And, away in the twilight lonesomely
(" What is the twilight ? " It's — getting late !)
I was thinking of things that were sad to me —
There, hush ! you know nothing about them, Kate.

Well, we had to go through the rocky lane,
Close to that bridge where the water roars,
By a still, red house, where the dark and rain
Go in when they will at the open doors ;
And the moon, that had just waked up, looked through
The broken old windows and seemed afraid,
And the wild bats flew and the thistles grew
Where once in the roses the children played

Just across the road by the cherry-trees
Some fallen white stones had been lying so long,

Half hid in the grass, and under these
There were people dead. I could hear the song
Of a very sleepy dove, as I passed
The graveyard near, and the cricket that cried;
And I looked (ah! the Ghost is coming at last!)
And something was walking at my side.

It seemed to be wrapped in a great dark shawl,
(For the night was a little cold, you know.)
It would not speak. It was black and tall;
And it walked so proudly and very slow.
Then it mocked me — everything I could do:
Now it caught at the lightning-flies like me;
Now it stopped where the elder-blossoms grew;
Now it tore the thorns from a gray bent tree.

Still it followed me under the yellow moon,
Looking back to the graveyard now and then,

Where the winds were playing the night a tune —
But, Katie, a Ghost doesn't care for *men*,
And your papa *couldn't* have done it harm !
Ah, dark-eyed darling, what is it you see ?
There, you needn't hide in your dimpled arm —
It was only my Shadow that walked with me !

AT HANS ANDERSEN'S FUNERAL.

WHY, all the children in all the world had
listened around his knee,
But the wonder-tales must end;
So, all the children in all the world came into the
church to see
The still face of their friend.

"But were any fairies there?" Why, yes, little ques-
tioner of mine,
For the fairies loved him too;
And all the fairies in all the world, as far as the moon
can shine,
Sobbed "Oh! what shall we do?"

Well, the children who played with the North's white
swans, away in the North's white snows,
Made wreaths of fir for his head ;
And the South's dark children scattered the scents
of the South's red rose
Down at the feet of the dead.

Yes, all the children in all the world were there, with
their tears, that day ;
But the boy who loved him best,
Alone in a damp and lonesome place (not far from
his grave) he lay, —
And sadder than all the rest.

" Mother," he moaned, " never mind the king — why,
what if the king is there ?
Never mind your faded shawl :
The king may never see it ; for the king will hardly care
To look at your clothes at all."

So, close to his coffin she crouched, in the breath of
the burial-flowers,
And begged for a bud or a leaf: —
"If I cannot have one, oh! sirs, to take to that poor
little room of ours,
My boy will die of his grief!"

My child, if the king *was* there — and I think he was
(but then I forget) —
Why, that was a little thing.
Did a dead man ever lift his head from its place in
the coffin yet,
Do you think, to bow to the king?

"But could he not see him up in Heaven?" I never
was there, you know;
But Heaven is too far, I fear,
For the ermine and purple and gold, that make up the
king, to show
So bravely as they do here.

But he saw the tears of the peasant-child, by the beautiful light he took
From the earth in his close-shut eyes ;
For tears are the sweetest of all the things we shall see, when we come to look
From the windows of the skies."

THE SAD STORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

OH, never mind her eyes and hair,
(Though they were dark and it was gold!)
That she was sweet is all I care
To tell you — till the rest is told.
—— "But is the story old?"

Hush. She *was* sweet —— Why do I cry?
Because — her mother loved her so.
I told you that she did not die;
But she is gone. "Where did she go?"
Ah me, — I do not know.

"How old was she when she was sweet?"

Why, one year old, or two, or three.



Here is her shoe — what little feet!

And yet they walked away, you see.

(I must not say, from me.)

"Did Gypsies take her?" Surely, no.
But — something took her; she is lost:
No track of hers in dew or snow,
No heaps of wild buds backward tossed,
To show what paths she crossed.

"Did Fairies take her?" It may be.
For Fairies sometimes, I have read,
Will climb the moonshine, secretly,
To steal a baby from its bed,
And leave an imp instead.

This Changeling, German tales declare,
Makes trouble in the house full soon:
Cries at the tangles in its hair,
Beats the piano out of tune,
And — wants to sleep till noon.

And, while it keeps the lost one's face,
It grows less lovely, year by year ——
Yes, in that pretty baby's place
There was a Changeling left, I fear.
. . . . My little maid, do you hear?

THE BABY'S HAND.

WHAT is it the Baby's hand can hold? —
Only one little flower, do you say?
Why, all the blossoms that ever blew
In the sweet wide wind away from the dew,
And all the jewels and all the gold
Of the kingdoms of the world to-day,
The Baby's hand can hold.

What is it the Baby's hand can hold?
Why, all the honey of all the bees,
And all the valleys where summer stays,
And all the sands of the desert's ways,
And the snows that were ever cold,

And all the mountains and all the seas,
The Baby's hand can hold.

What is it the Baby's hand can hold —
The Baby's hand so pretty and small?
Why, just what the shoulders of Atlas bear,
Bending him down in the picture there:
(Now all I can tell you is surely told) —
"But that is the world?" Well, that is all
The Baby's hand can hold.

How is it the Baby's hand can hold
The world? —— Yes, surely I ought to know;
For oh, were the Baby's hand withdrawn,
Down in the dust the world were gone,
Folded therein as you might fold
The sad white bud of a rose — just so —
For the Baby's hand to hold.

QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

[MARIAN, SIX YEARS OLD.]

"Do angels wear white dresses, say?
Always, or only in the summer? Do
Their birthdays have to come like mine, in May?
Do they have scarlet sashes then, or blue?

"When little Jessie died last night,
How could she walk to Heaven — it is so far?
How did she find the way without a light?
There wasn't even any moon or star.

"Will she have red or golden wings?
Then will she have to be a bird, and fly?
Do they take men like presidents and kings
In hearses with black plumes clear to the sky?

"How old is God? Has he gray hair?
Can He see yet? Where did He have to stay
Before — you know — he had made — Anywhere?
Who does He pray to — when He has to pray?

"How many drops are in the sea?
How many stars? —— well, then, you ought to know
How many flowers are on an apple-tree?
How does the wind look when it doesn't blow?

"Where does the rainbow end? And why
Did — Captain Kidd — bury the gold there? When
Will this world burn? And will the firemen try
To put the fire out with the engines then?

"If you should ever die, may we
Have pumpkins growing in the garden, so
My fairy godmother can come for me,
When there's a prince's ball, and let me go?

"Read Cinderella just once more ——
What makes — men's other wives — so mean?" I know
That I was tired, it may be cross, before
I shut the painted book for her to go.

Hours later, from a child's white bed
I heard the timid, last queer question start:
"Mamma, are you — my stepmother?" it said.
The innocent reproof crept to my heart.

OF TWO.

"LOVE him more," they said to me,
"Since you need not love the other;
He is sweet as sweet can be!"
And — they took away his brother.

"Only give him back his place."
Brown head nestling near and nearer,
Little laughing two-years' face,
You are dear — if *he* is dearer!

Let him sleep? He cannot care?
Love is only for the living? —
Still this breathing child's own share
To the dead one I am giving.

TELLING A FORTUNE.

YOU little maid, give me your hand ;
You need not cross my own with gold.
The stars I hardly understand,
But — truth enough you shall be told.

First, you *will* travel — here and there,
Through miles and miles of night and day,
From somewhere onward to somewhere —
With snows and blossoms all the way.

Your journey will be long, or brief ;—
If long, some bitter fruit will blow,

Through stormy bough and frosty leaf,
From all these pretty flowers, you know.

I cannot help these things for you.
I only think it had been best
If Eve, before the apple grew,
Had let the bud die on her breast.

Yes, yes; I *do* forget. Oh, dear! —
You blush and ask for wedding rings?
Why, thirteen Mays! Where did you hear,
Poor child, of all these foolish things?

But you will be a nun, and fade
In serge, like Sister Edith there,
And wish — that convents were not made,
And you had kept your lovely hair!

No; since you have a pleasant face,
You will be — Madam This or That,
And tire of pearls and paint and lace,
And every mirror you look at.



No; in some cottage you will wear —
Just what you can, I think, and try

To make the best of your sweet share
Of this fine world — and sometimes cry!

There! — do not fold your hands, I pray,
(Though folded hands end every tale;)
Make haste and broider, while you may,
The first buds in your bridal veil!

OFFERS FOR THE CHILD.

IN the dim spaces of a dream, you see —
Somewhere, perhaps, or else not anywhere,
(Remember in a dream what things may be) —
I met a stranger with the whitest hair.

From his wide, wandering beard the snow-flakes whirled —
(His face when young, no doubt, was much admired:)
His name was Atlas, and he held the world;
I held a child — and both of us were tired.

"A handsome boy," he courteously said;
"He pleases my old fancy. What fine eyes!"
"Yes, father, but he wearies me. My head
Is aching, too, and — listen how he cries!"

"If you would let me take him" —— and he spread
All his fair laces and deep velvets wide;
Then hid them from my smile, and, in their stead,
Sweet jewels and vague sums of gold he tried.

Then ships, all heavy with the scents and sounds
Of many a sea, the stains of many a sun;
Then palaces, with empires for their grounds,
Were slowly offered to me, one by one.

"Then take the world! It will amuse you. So,
Watch while I move its wires." An instant, then,
He laughed. "Look, child, at this quick puppet-show:"
I saw a rich land dusk with marching men.

"This puppet with the smile inscrutable,
You call The Emperor; these, Statesmen; these —
No matter; this, who just now plays the fool,
Is" —— "Not our" —— "It is, madam, if you please!" *

"Hush! ——" "Take the world and move them as you will! —
Give me the boy."
—— Then, shivering with affright,
I held the close cheek's dimples closer still,
And bade the old Peddler — for I woke — good-night!

* 186–.

IF I HAD MADE THE WORLD.

IF I had made the world — ah me!
I might have left some things undone!
But as to *him* — my boy, you see,
A pretty world this world would be,
I'd say, without George Washington!

Would I have made the Baby? Oh,
There were no need of anything
Without the Baby, you must know!
—— I'm a Republican, and so
I never would have made "the King."

I might have made the President —
Had I known how to make him right!
—— Columbus? Yes, if I had meant
To find a flowering continent
Already made for me, I might.

I would have made one poet too —
Has God made more? —— Yes, I forgot,
There is no need of asking you;
You know as little as I do.
A poet is — well, who knows what?

And yet a poet is, my dear,
A man who writes a book like this,
(There never *was* but one, I hear;)
—— Yes, it is hard to spell S-h-a-k-e-s-p-e-a-r-e.
So, now, Good-night, — and here's a kiss.

You are not tired? — You want to know
What else I would have made? Not much:

A few white lambs that would not grow;
Some violets that would stay; some snow
Not quite too cold for you to touch.

I'd not have taught my birds to fly;
My deepest seas would not be deep! —
My highest mountains hardly high;
My deserts full of dates should lie —
But why will you not go to sleep?

I'd *not* have made the wind, because
It's made of — nothing. Never mind.
Nor any white bears — they have claws;
(Nor "Science," no, nor "Nature's laws!")
Nor made the North Pole hard to find!

I'd *not* have made the monkeys — (then
No one could ever prove to me
There ever was a season when

All these fine creatures we call men
Hung chattering in some tropic tree!)

Once more, Good-night. This time you hear?
Please hear as well my morning call.
——Yes, first I'll tell you something queer:
If *I* had made the world, I fear —
I'd not have made the world at all!

THE FAVORITE OF FIVE.

WHICH of five snowdrops would the moon
Think whitest, if the moon could see?
Which of five rosebuds flushed with June
Were reddest to the mother-tree?
Which of five birds, that play one tune
On their soft-shining throats, may be
Chief singer? Who will answer me?

Would not the moon know, if around
One snowdrop any shadow lay? —
Would not the rose-tree, if the ground
Should let one blossom droop a day?

Does not the one bird take a sound
Into the cloud, when caught away,
Finer than all the sounds that stay?



Oh, little, quiet boy of mine,
Whose yellow head lies languid here —

Poor yellow head, its restless shine
 Brightened the butterflies last year! —
Whose pretty hands may intertwine
 With paler hands unseen but near:
 You are my favorite now, I fear!

A COAT-OF-ARMS.

ROSE says her family is so old, —
Older than yours, perhaps? Ah me!
. . . (How wise she is. Who could have told
So much to such a child as she? —

If those sweet sisters teach her this,
Their veils are vanity, I fear.) . . .
Pray, what comes next, my lovely miss?
—— You want a coat-of-arms, my dear?

Ah? — other people have such things?
Rose had *ancestors*, too — an earl?

Tell Rose *you* have the blood of kings,
And show it — when you blush, my girl!

I am not jesting; I could name
Among the greatest, one or two
Who have the right (divine) to claim
Remote relationship with you.

Alfred — who never burned a cake!
Arthur — who had no Table Round,
Nor knight like Launcelot of the Lake,
Nor ruled one rood of English ground!

Lear, who outraved the storm — at most
The crown is straw that crowns old age;
And Hamlet's father —— he's a ghost?
A real ghost, though — on the stage!

Edwards and Henries — and of these
Old Bluebeard Hal, from whom you take

Your own bluff manners, if you please!
. . . Let's *love* him, for Queen Catherine's sake!

Richard from Holy Land, who heard —
Or did not hear — poor Blondel's song;
That other Richard, too, the Third,
Whom Shakespeare does a grievous wrong;

But — still he smothered in the Tower
The pretty princes? Charles, whose head,
At Cromwell's breath fell as a flower
Falls at the frost — as I have read!

Another Charles, who had the crown
Of France and Germany to hold,
But, at a cloister laid it down,
And kept two hollow hands to fold.

Philip the Handsome, who will rise
From his old grave, the legends say,

And show the sun those Flemish eyes
That —— yes, I mean at Judgment Day.

Louis the Grand —— Madam is so
Like some one at his court, you hear ?
These Washington reporters, though,
Were never at his court, I fear !

Great Frederick, with his snuff (I may
Say something of great Peter, too)
And one who made kings out of clay
And lost the world at Waterloo !

Of others, more than I could write,
In some still cave scarce known to men
One sleeps in his long beard's red light
A hundred years — then sleeps again.

One — who with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabia — sat forlorn

In Jewelled death at Aix —— ah, well,
Who listens now for Roland's horn?

One who was half a god, they say,
Cried for the stars — and died of wine;
One pushed the crown of Rome away —
And Antony's speech was very fine!

. . . The Shah of Persia, too? Why, yes,
He and his overcoat, no doubt.
—— Oh, the Khedive *will* send, I guess,
Half Egypt * — when he finds you out!

That royal lady, late the Queen,
Now Empress of all space, must own
Your race might give you grace to lean
Right near her new imperial throne.

* Allusion to the Khedive's present to an American lady.

Victor of Italy, the Czar,
Franz-Joseph, the sweet Spanish youth,
And Prussian William — these all are
Your kinsmen, child, in very truth.

Lilies and lions, new-world stars,
Damascus swords and Spartan shields,
Crescents and crosses, feuds and scars,
Meet and confuse in famous fields ; —

Your coat-of-arms then —— I forgot
Some kings, the oldest, wisest, best ;
Take Jason's golden fleece — why not ?
Put Solomon's seal upon your crest.

There, I can prove your Family's ties
Bind you to all the Great, I trust :
Its Founder lived in Paradise ;
And his ancestor was — the Dust.

Can Rose say more? . . . Your ancient Tree
Must hold a sword of fire (its root
Down in the very grave must be)
With serpent and — Forbidden Fruit.

HIDING THE BABY.

HOLD him close, and closer hold him,
(Ah, but this is time to cry!)
Bring his pretty cloak and fold him
From the Old Man going by.
What Old Man? You can not guess?
Not the Old Man of the Sea,
Or the Mountains, I confess,
Can be half so old as he.

Could we only catch and bind him,
To some prison, shutting low,
Where the sun could never find him,

This Old Man should surely go.
We would steal his scythe away,
(Grass should grow about our feet,)
And he should not take to-day
From us while to-day was sweet.

Gypsy-ways he has, most surely,
(Gypsy-ways are hardly right,)
Wandering, stealing, yet securely
Keeping, somehow, out of sight.
From our trees the fruit he shakes ;
Silver, lace, or silk, we miss
From our houses — this he takes,
This and other things than this.

Here he comes with buds that wither,
Here he comes with birds that fly !
Pretty playthings he brings hither,

Just to take them bye and bye.
He could find you in the night,
Though you should put out the moon —
He can see without a light.
He will take the Baby soon.

Head with gold enough about it
Just to light this whole world through,
Ah, what shall we do without it? —
Children, say, what shall we do?
Tell me, is there any place
We can hide the Baby? Say.
Can we cover up his face
While the Old Man goes this way?

There is one place, one place only,
We can hide him, if we must —
Very still and low and lonely;

We can cover him with dust.
Shut a wild-rose in his hand,
Set a wild-rose at his head:—
This Old Man, you understand,
Cannot take from us the dead.

PLAYING BEGGARS.

"LET us pretend we are two beggars." "No,
For beggars are im—— something, something bad;
You *know* they are, because Papa says so,
And Papa when he calls them that looks mad;
You should have seen him, how he frowned one day,
When Mamma gave his wedding-coat away."

"Well, now he can't get married any more,
Because he has no wedding-coat to wear.
But that poor ragged soldier at the door
Was starved to death in prison once somewhere,
And shot dead somewhere else, and it was right
To give him coats — because he had to fight.

"Now let's be beggars." "They're im—postors. Yes,
That's what they are, im—postors; and that means
Rich people, for they all *are* rich, I guess—



Richer than we are, rich as Jews or queens,
And *they're* just playing beggars when they cry——"
"Then let us play like they do, you and I."

"Well, we 'll be rich and wear old naughty clothes."

"But they're *not* rich. If they were rich they'd buy
All the fine horses at the fairs and shows
To give to General Grant. I'll *tell* you why:
Once when the rebels wanted to kill all
The men in this *world* — *he* let Richmond fall!

"That broke them up! I like the rebels, though,
Because they have the curliest kind of hair.
One time, so many years and years ago,
I saw one over in Kentucky there.
It showed me such a shabby sword and said
It wanted to cut off — Somebody's head!

"But — *do* play beggar. You be one; and, mind,
Shut up one eye, and get all over dust,
And say this:
'Lady, be so very kind
As to give me some water. Well, I must

Rest on your step, I think, ma'am, for a while ——
I've walked full twenty if I've walk'd one mile.

"'Lady, this is your little girl, I know;
She is a beautiful child — and just like you;
You look too young to be her mother, though.
This handsome boy is like his father, too:
The gentleman was he who passed this way
And looked so cross — so pleasant I *should* say.

"'But trouble, Lady, trouble puts me wrong.
Lady, I'm sure you'll spare a dress or two —
You look so stylish. (Oh, if I was strong!)
And shoes? Yours are too small. I need them new,
The money —— thank you! Now you have some tea,
And flour, and sugar, you'll not miss, for me?

"'Ah, I forgot to tell you that that my house
Was burned last night. My baby has no bread,

And I'm as poor, ma'am, as a cellar-mouse.
My husband died once; my grandmother's dead —
She was a good soul (but she's gone, that's true ——
You have some coffee, madam?)— so are you.' "

" Oh, it's too long. I can't say half of *that!*
I'll not be an im—postor, any how.
(But I should like to give one my torn hat,
So I could get a prettier one, just now.)
They're worse than Christians, ghosts, or — any thing!
—— I'll play that I'm a great man or a king."

WISHING FOR DIAMONDS.*

DIAMONDS? Ah me! I've heard of some
That you might have. Yes, I know where.
A princess wore them. She is dumb,
And deaf, and blind. She will not care.

"What does she wear without them?" Oh,
White linen, folded. That is best.
If you were she? — you would not know,
Perhaps, how sweetly you were dressed.

"Where are the diamonds?" In the East
A king sits grieving so, to-day,

* The allusions in this piece are to the newspaper account of, with the circumstances attending, the death of a daughter of the Khedive of Egypt.

That neither soldier, slave, nor priest
Dare speak to him, the whispers say.

You did not know that there were things
In all this world, or any place,
That ever *could* be hard for kings? —
His trouble makes him hide his face.

"Then is his palace lost?" Why, no;
Not lost, but empty — that is it.
The enchanted lamps above him glow;
The satin shadows round him flit.

Meanwhile his camels wander by,
The poor get gold and wine and bread;
And Egypt hears the old, old cry,
Because his favorite child is dead.

. . . . It is the diamonds — I forget ?
You wonder where they can be hid ?
I fear that you could see them yet ;
They are upon her coffin lid.

Something the princess there has not,
Something you have, would buy them quite
A thousand times. What is it, what ?
Then you would give it, if you might ?

. . . . Ah, what is bitter, what is true,
In this sweet, doubtful world but death ?
. . . . So you will give it, will you — you ?
Well, then, red lips, it is your breath.

KEEPING THE FAITH.

HOW long must you believe in Fairy-land?
Forever, child. You must not bear to doubt
That one true country sweeter than this honey,
Where little people surely go about
And buy and sell with grains of golden sand,
Which they, indeed, the foolish things, call money!

Believe, while out of broken bits of dew,
For window-panes, something you cannot see —
Something that never *was* a bird — is peeping,
And whispering what you cannot hear to you,
Shy as a shadow, where some good old tree,
Close by, its friendly watch and ward is keeping.

Who have believed in it? Why, all the men
In all the world — and all the women, too.
Because it is so pleasant to believe in:
There are so many pretty things to do,
Such light to laugh and dance in; yes, and then
Such lonesome, rainy woods for one to grieve in.

Believe in it. Until he sailed from Spain
Columbus did. (But keep it out of sight.)
Yes, he found Fairy-land, and found it surely,
(And landed there as one who had a right;)
But reached his hand for it, and caught a chain,
Which in his coffin he can keep securely.

Then captains have believed in it and gone
With swords and soldiers there to fight for it,
And torn their plumes and spoiled their scarlet sashes,
But mended matters for us scarce a whit.

Why, Cinderella, her glass slippers on,
Goes there — yes, now — from kitchen-smoke and ashes!

Did I believe in Fairy-land? I do.
The young believe in it less than the old.
As eyes grow blind and heads grow white and whiter
(The heads that dreamed about it in their gold)
We change its name to Heaven. That makes it true,
And all the light of all the stars grows lighter.

TALK ABOUT GHOSTS.

[AT BED–TIME.]

"*Each of us carries within him a future ghost.*"

WHAT *is* a ghost? "It is something white,
(And I guess *it* goes barefooted, too,)
That comes from the graveyard in the night,
When the doors are locked, and breaks right through."
What does it do?

"Oh, it frightens people ever so much,
And goes away when the chickens crow;
And — doesn't steal any spoons, or touch

One thing that isn't its own, you know."
Who told you so?

"Somebody — everybody, almost;
Or I knew, myself, when this world begun.
Not even a General could kill a ghost ——
I wish the Lord had never made one.
They hate the sun!"

No, sweetest of all wee brown-eyed girls,
They love the light — 'tis the dark they fear;
Love riches and power, love laces and pearls;
Love — all the preacher calls vanity here.
This much is clear.

"Do they love to be dead?" I can but tell
That few of them greatly love to die:
Perhaps they doubt whether all is well

In the place where ghosts —— yes, "up in the sky."
You wonder why?

They love their clothes (and want to keep dressed:)
Whether new and prettily white and red,
Or gray and ragged, 'tis hard, at best,
To take them off — though the prayers are said —
And go to bed.

THE GIFT OF EMPTY HANDS.

A FAIRY TALE.

THEY were two princes doomed to death;
Each loved his beauty and his breath:
"Leave us our life and we will bring
Fair gifts unto our lord, the King."

They went together. In the dew
A charméd bird before them flew:
Through sun and thorn one followed it;
Upon the other's arm it lit.

A rose, whose faintest flush was worth
All buds that ever blew on earth,

One climbed the rocks to reach; ah, well,
Into the other's breast it fell.

Weird jewels, such as fairies wear,
When moons go out, to light their hair,
One tried to touch on ghostly ground;
Gems of quick fire the other found.

One with the dragon fought, to gain
The enchanted fruit, and fought in vain;
The other breathed the garden's air,
And gathered precious apples there.

Backward to the imperial gate
One took his fortune, one his fate:
One showed sweet gifts from sweetest lands,
The other torn and empty hands.

At bird, and rose, and gem, and fruit,
The King was sad — the King was mute.

At last he slowly said : " My son,
True treasure is not lightly won.

" Your brother's hands, wherein you see
Only these scars, show more to me
Than if a kingdom's price I found
In place of each forgotten wound."

MY ARTIST.

[A. V. P. — *Nat.* 1864.]

SO slight, and just a little vain
Of eyes and amber-tinted hair
Such as you will not see again —
To watch him at the window there,
Why, you would not suspect, I say,
The rising rival of Doré.

No sullen lord of foreign verse
Such as great Danté yet he knows;
No Wandering Jew's long legend-curse
On his light hand its darkness throws;

Nor has the Bible suffered much,
So far, from his irreverent touch.

Yet, can his restless pencil lack
A master Fancy, weird and strong
In black-and-white — but chiefly black ! —
When at its call such horrors throng ?
What Fantasies of Fairy-land
More shadowy were ever planned !

But giants and enchantments make
Not all the glory of his Art :
His vast and varied power can take
In real things a real part.
His latest pictures here I see :
Will you not look at some with me ?

First, "Alexander." From his wars,
With arms of awful length he seems

To reach some very-pointed stars,
As if "more worlds" were in his dreams!
But, hush — the Artist tells us why:
"You read — 'His hands could touch the sky.'"



Here — mark how marvelous, how new! —
Above a drowning ship, at night,
Close to the moon the sun shines, too,

While lightnings show in streaks of white ——
Still, should my eyes grow dim, ah, then
Their tears will wet those sinking men!

There in wild weather, quite forlorn,
And queer of cloak, and grim of hat,
With locks that might be better shorn,
High on a steeple — who is that?
"It is the man who — I forget —
Stood on a tower in the wet."

His faults? He yet is young, you know —
Four with his last year's butterflies.
But think what wonders books may show
When the new Tennysons arise!
For fame that he might illustrate
Let poets be content to wait!

SOMEBODY'S TROUBLE.

COME, you little maiden, hush a while your fretting;—
Surely you have trouble with your ribbons and your rings,
And trouble with the rain, which always is forgetting
That you want to go church — and with many other things.

There *is* trouble with your gloves, and trouble with your dresses;
There is trouble with your music —— You hate music? Does a bird?

There is trouble with your French, which poor
Madame half confesses
Is rather the most foreign that she has ever heard.

Why, the first thing in the morning, if Spring chance
to be the season,
After trouble with awaking, there is trouble with
the dew;
Yes, the May-dew *is* the meanest, and there ought to
be no reason
Why, to make your face look fairer, it should have
to wet your shoe.

You have trouble with the sun, which, instead of being
pleasant —
Only pleasant, nothing further — is too gracious
with his heat;
And there's trouble with the moon, which is some-
times just a crescent

When it *should* shine full and golden through the
shadow at your feet.

You have trouble with the blossoms, which keep lying
close and curly, —
Afraid of wind and all that, — although you want
to wear
A bud of rose or violet, that's "out" a little early,
To some beautiful pert party in your muslins and
your hair.

You have trouble with the fruit — with the lagging
sweet strawberries,
(And with Wolsley's killing frost, which make
shrouds of many a flower
For the apples and the peaches, for the pears and
plums and cherries;)
And there's trouble with those grapes which the
fable says are sour.

You have trouble with the convent, where each pale
and patient sister,
After trouble with her rosary and trouble with her
veil,
Has trouble with your trouble. There was one (I
could have kissed her!)
Why, she told me you were lovely. Wasn't that a
pretty tale?

You have trouble, through your books, with some hun-
dred thousand cities,
With a spicy lot of islands and a stormy set of seas,
With your moods, sometimes imperative; and certainly
one pities
A golden head so sadly vexed with unknown quan-
tities.

You have trouble with all nations too, through history
or tradition,

With their manners, dress, religions, with their kings
and with their wars,
And (perhaps somewhat remotely, through the tele-
scopic vision
Of Professor This or That,) you have trouble with
the stars.

Now, since you must have trouble, since to bear it
you seem able,
(I fancy even trouble may be made a little sweet,)
Suppose you take your trouble and arrange it on the
table;
Let the China, glass, and silver show that trouble
can be neat.

Suppose you try, with tronble, if you cannot please
the baby,
(He has many a pretty failure and many a grievous
loss;)

And suppose you dust a chair or two as charmingly as may be,
And suppose you teach a housemaid just how not to be so cross.

AN EAST INDIAN FAIRY STORY.

ALL day she was yellow and gray and thin;
All day she was troubled with time and tears;
All day she was dressed in the withered skin
Of a woman who lived a hundred years.

All day she begged, through the heavy heat,
For a drop of water, a grain of rice;
But she sat, in the twilight, still and sweet,
Close to the leaves of the blossoming spice.

At a fairy fountain dim in the air,
In a garment white as a priestess wears,
With a lotus-bud in her lovely hair,
And her hand in the water, she said her prayers.

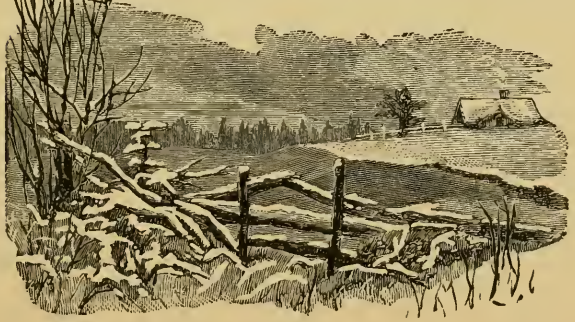
"Oh, well do I hide my beauty all day
From the sun and the cruel eyes I dread;
But the gods can see me when I pray,
And I must look fair to the gods," she said.

THE FIRST SIGHT OF SNOW.



OH, come and look at his
blue, sweet eyes,
As, through the window,
they glance around
And see the glittering
white surprise
The Night has laid on the
ground !

This beautiful Mystery you have seen,
So new to your life, and to mine so old,
Little wordless Questioner —— "What does
it mean?"
Why, it means, I fear, that the world is cold.



"A PRECIOUS SEEING."

MY fairies, weary of snow and fire,
Of frost on window and ice on tree
I can show you Summer until you tire ;
Come — look behind you awhile and see :
Why, here is the nest in our old bent brier,
Where the brown bird used to be !

Ah, here is the brown bird, just as shy,
In the little leaves, with her warm wings down
On the wee white eggs, that, bye and bye,
Will change into other birds as brown ——
If you go too near you will make her fly,
And that may make me frown.

And here is the flower you must not touch —
The first that bloomed in our grass, you know.
Your butterflies, look! — were there ever such? —
Wild with the sun they glitter and go.
And here are the lambs you loved so much —
How little they seem to grow!

And here are the berries black and sweet;
And here, in the glimmer of lightning-flies,
Is the gray strange man you used to meet,
Who walked at evening — to reach the skies?
Oh, never look out through the dark and sleet,
Look down in your own fair eyes!

THE LITTLE STOCKINGS.

(ON CHRISTMAS EVE.)

HE will see sweet Stockings, cunning and new,
Warm in scarlet, and dainty in white —
Stockings that never have crept in a shoe —
Waiting his morning's enchanted light.

And other glad Stockings, that he should know —
Grown larger, perhaps, than they were last year! —
In many a pretty, half-sleepy row
They wonder, no doubt, if he is near!

This Saint of the children, who loves them so,
Fairily filling each colored space,

Will touch clear dreams with his kiss — and go
With tears, I think, in his tender face.

Ah, spite of his furs, he will shiver, I fear,
At the thought of some Stockings, bright and small,
Whose curious looks are no longer here,
Awake for him, by the lonesome wall!

Oh, you whose little hands reach no more
Toward his gray, kind beard in their dimpled play,
Whose little feet passed through the great, dim Door,
With never a step nor a sound, away:

Have you found Another, who lights with love
His Birthday Tree for your charméd eyes?
Do you see in its branches the snow-white Dove?
Is it fair with the flowering fruit of the skies?

"MORE ABOUT THE FAIRIES."

IN daisy-leaf dresses too pretty to touch,
And little lace-wings made of dreams and of dew,
I think I have told you as much and as much
Of these people of moonshine — as ever I knew!

"Then read about them in the Bible?" Look here,
You smallest of saints (for your first name is Paul),
The truth is, if I can remember, I fear
The Bible says nothing about them at all.

"Then when did God make them?" Why, when he made Eve
They were hid in the lilies of Eden, I guess.

"But the Snake?" — Never mind; you and I will
believe
In the angels a little — the snake somewhat less!



You thought it was after the flood they were made
(When the dove was so white and the sea was so dark,)

Because there were none of them, you are afraid,
With the other wild animals, saved in the ark!

"But if they are not in the Bible, why then
They are not anywhere — for they cannot be true?"
They're in — next-to-the-Bible! The greatest of men
Believed in them, surely, as much as you do.

You do *not* believe in them? — "It would be sin
To believe in things out of the Bible?" Oh, dear!
Fair sir, are you not rather young to begin
To be doubting the faith of — one Mr. Shakespeare?

. . . . Still, sooner or later, Time touches the towers
Where the Golden Hair used to glimmer so, —

Then what is there left in this wide world of ours
That we children care any longer to know?

. . . . Go, then, and believe in the red on the rose,
In the gold on the moon, in the butterfly's wings,
And believe, if you will, in — the wind as it blows
The beauty away from all beautiful things!

FIVE AND TWO.

YOU have cherry-trees to climb,
Lambs to look at, doves to coo;
I can kiss you any time;
Butterflies will fly from you.
You are five and they are two.

You have violets to find,
Songs to hear and words to say;
They are deaf and dumb and blind,
They are still for many a day.
You have light, and what have they?

You can sleep and dream and wake,
You can play in sand and snow,

Hearts not old enough to ache.
Lying lonesome, lying low,
What they do I do not know.

You are five: about your feet
Buds are nestling warm in bed.
Sweet-brier and all things as sweet
Grow for them, but overhead.
They are two and — they are dead.

They are dead: that is the most
I can know of them, ah me!
. . . . No, I never saw a ghost, —
Nor an angel. There must be
Somewhere things I cannot see.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

(*Sung to a Wakeful Little Boy one Rainy Autumn Evening.*)

GOOD Little Boy, have you got any fire,
To warm a little fairy
Wet and dripping,
Out-doors knocking? —
Good Little Boy, have you got any fire?

Good Little Boy, have you got any fire,
To warm a little puppy,
Wet and dripping,
Out-doors barking?
Good Little Boy, have you got any fire?

Good Little Boy, have you got any fire,
To warm a little kitten,
Wet and dripping,
Out-doors mewing? —
Good Little Boy, have you got any fire?

Good Little Boy, have you got any fire,
To warm a little fairy,
Wet and dripping,
Out-doors knocking?
Good Little Boy, have you got any fire?

1865.

LAST WORDS.

OVER A LITTLE BED AT NIGHT.

GOOD–NIGHT, pretty sleepers of mine —
I never shall see you again :
Ah, never in shadow or shine ;
Ah, never in dew or in rain !

In your small dreaming-dresses of white,
With the wild-bloom you gathered to-day
In your quiet shut hands, from the light
And the dark you will wander away.

Though no graves in the bee-haunted grass,
And no love in the beautiful sky,

Shall take you as yet, you will pass,
With this kiss, through these tear-drops. Good-by!

With less gold and more gloom in their hair,
When the buds near have faded to flowers,
Three faces may wake here as fair —
But older than yours are, by hours!

Good-night, then, lost darlings of mine —
I never shall see you again:
Ah, never in shadow or shine;
Ah, never in dew or in rain!

Out-of-Doors.

BABY OR BIRD?

"BUT is he a baby or a Bird?"
Sometimes I fancy I do not know;
His voice is as sweet as I ever heard
Far up where the light leaves blow.

Then his lovely eyes, I think, would see
As clear as a Bird's in the upper air;
And his red-brown head, it seems to me,
Would do for a Bird to bear.

"If he were a Bird," you wisely say,
"He would have some wings to know him by:"

Ah, he has wings, that are flying away
Forever — how fast they fly !

They are flying with him, by day, by night ;
Under suns and stars, over storm and snow,
These fair, fine wings, that elude the sight,
In softest silence they go.

Come, kiss him as often as you may ——
Hush, never talk of this time next year,
For the same small Bird that we pet to-day,
To-morrow is never here !

MY BOYS.

THE first is for the sea :
I knew it well, sad years ago.
He builds small ships and talks to me
Of what the sailors know.

He was the fairest child : —
Such lovely eyes, such faint-gold hair,
Half curled, such dimples when he smiled,
Such sweetness everywhere !

The sea is weird and wide ;
And when I give it him to keep,

How will the night-pulse of the tide
Beat through my troubled sleep !

The next, perhaps, will climb
The highest mountain in the world,
Or see, through some wild desert time,
The Arab lances whirled.

The mountain's icy spears
Will wound me then, the airy flow
Of the false fountain through my tears
In sun and sand will go ;

And that blue flower-like look
Under his quiet lids will lie
Shut, like a picture in a book,
In my heart till I die !

The next is fierce and sweet: —
Dark glances, light limbs never still,
A bird's voice and a fairy's feet,
And — a young lion's will!

Ah, he is for the sword, —
He wears the soldier's careless grace;
God keep him, for his path goes toward
A very ghastly place.

The next — my pretty boy,
My darling of all darlings, he
Whose little laugh is joy of joy: —
What shall the baby be?

The others merrily say:
"Baby must be the finest thing!"

Baby must keep his own bright way? —
Baby must be a king?

"Baby must be two kings —
He has two crowns," again they cry,
"On his brown head — the cunning things!"
Where shall his kingdom lie?



THE LAMB IN THE SKY.

"THERE is a lamb," the children said;—
Sweet in the grass they saw it lie.

But the baby lifted the goldenest head,
And looked for the lamb, in the sky.

Then the children laughed as they saw him look
At the high white clouds, but I know not why —
For (have I not read in a beautiful Book ?)
There *is* a Lamb in the sky.

THE END OF THE RAINBOW.

MAY you go to find it? You must, I fear;
Ah, lighted young eyes, could I show you how ——
"Is it past those lilies that look so near?"
Is it past all flowers. Will you listen, now?

The pretty new moons faded out of the sky,
The bees and butterflies out of the air,
And sweet wild songs would flutter and fly
Into wet dark leaves and the snow's white glare.

There were winds and shells full of lonesome cries,
There were lightnings and mists along the way,

And the deserts would glitter against my eyes,
Where the beautiful phantom-fountains play.

At last, in a place very dusty and bare,
Some little dead birds I had petted to sing,
Some little dead flowers I had gathered to wear,
Some withered thorns and an empty ring,

Lay scattered. My fairy story is told.
(It does not please her: she has not smiled.)
What is it you say? — Did I find the gold?
Why, I found the End of the Rainbow, child!

TWO BABIES IN BED.

[LITTLE GUY'S ANSWER.]

"THINK of the Baby at home," I said;—
"(How pretty he is to kiss!)
It is white and warm in his little bed,
It is dark and cold in this."

He laughed and said, with his hand in the dew
Of the sweet small grave close by,
Where the grass of the lonesomest summer grew:
"*This* Baby does not cry."

AFTER WINGS.

THIS was your butterfly, you see.
His fine wings made him vain? —
The caterpillars crawl, but he
Passed them in rich disdain? —
My pretty boy says, "Let him be
Only a worm again?"

Oh, child, when things have learned to wear
Wings once, they must be fain
To keep them always high and fair.
Think of the creeping pain
Which even a butterfly must bear
To be a worm again!

COUNTING FOUR.

GLAD to have glad children see,
As they pass it in the sun,
Just how red a flower can be,
Here's a rose — and that is *one.*

Glad to hear the first bee sing,
Glad to look so wild and blue,
Glad to be so sweet a thing,
Here's a violet — that is *two.*

Glad to fly, and glad to rest,
Glad to chirp in this old tree,

Glad to build another nest,
Here's a bird — and that is *three.*

Glad to keep so white and clean,
(Baby now can count no more,)
Glad to find the world so green,
Here's a lamb — and that is *four!*

THE FUNERAL OF A DOLL.

THEY used to call her Little Nell,
In memory of that lovely child
Whose story each had learned to tell.
She, too, was slight and still and mild,
Blue-eyed and sweet; she always smiled,
And never troubled any one
Until her pretty life was done.
And so they tolled a tiny bell,
That made a wailing fine and faint,
As fairies ring, and all was well.
Then she became a waxen saint.

Her funeral it was small and sad.
Some birds sang bird-hymns in the air.
The humming-bee seemed hardly glad,
Spite of the honey everywhere.
The very sunshine seemed to wear
Some thought of death, caught in its gold,
That made it waver wan and cold.
Then, with what broken voice he had,
The Preacher slowly murmured on
(With many warnings to the bad)
The virtues of the Doll now gone.

A paper coffin rosily-lined
Had Little Nell. There, drest in white,
With buds about her, she reclined,
A very fair and piteous sight —
Enough to make one sorry, quite.
And, when at last the lid was shut

Under white flowers, I fancied —— but
No matter. When I heard the wind
 Scatter Spring-rain that night across
The Doll's wee grave, with tears half-blind
 One child's heart felt a grievous loss.

" It was a funeral, mamma. Oh,
 Poor Little Nell is dead, is dead.
How dark! — and do you hear it blow?
 She is afraid." And, as she said
 These sobbing words, she laid her head
Between her hands and whispered: " Here
Her bed is made, the precious dear —
She cannot sleep in it, I know.
 And there is no one left to wear
Her pretty clothes. *Where did she go?*
 —— See, this poor ribbon tied her hair!"

PASSING THE GYPSY CAMP.

SO, here they are on the hills again;
They always come with the robins hither.
But where do they stay when the wind and rain,
Make the women's faces wither?

They come from Egypt, as I have heard.
(Didn't Pharaoh look like that brown fellow?)
Yes, picturesque is a right fine word
For rags in scarlet and yellow.

See the wide straw hats, the purplish hair,
The doubtful eyes, and the graceless graces;

The tents, and the wild fires here and there,
In the greenest, shyest places.

The oldest, wisest of all comes here.
(Last May her promise was sweet as honey, —
I wish, with the interest of a year,
She would give me back my money !)

What did she say ? Why, she only said,
Frowning a trifle, and bending double,
(Never a star had the gray cheat read,)
"Wait lady, you have seen trouble."

How did she know ? (Why, I think she knew
For this one reason, and many others :)
Oh, she knew, at least, that I had seen *you*
At war with your valiant brothers !

She said my trouble would end, forsooth,
And so it will — when the moon is ready
To light my grave. So, it *was* the truth,
But — you look at me too steady!

If you are afraid, then speak her fair
(She isn't a witch like Macbeth's witches;)
But — what should the rosiest children care
For glory and sorrow and riches?

My good, weird woman (O, what a noise
Of crowing, neighing, babbling and snarling.)
What will become of some poor little boys —
Yes, the youngest *is* a darling!

There! she will turn one's head with the stuff
That dreams are made of, if one will let her.

I can tell you, and true enough,
Something as good, or better.

Never the President will you be,
None of you — not if you do grow older.
Nor the greatest of generals — bright with three
Stars or so, on the shoulder.

No pictures to paint, no books to make,
No "suns in flames" to be looking after;
No speeches — just for the country's sake,
Or "cheers from the house," and "laughter."

But the pretty summers will come to you,
With blossoms to find and wings to follow;
And I'd say a world where strawberries grew,
Of a truth was not quite hollow.

Sometimes you will come to grief, no doubt.
Most of us do. But we have to take it.
Why, I should have left the trouble out
Of this earth — had I helped to make it.

At last you will shut your eyes and forget
That red-birds fly, or that cow-bells tinkle!
And sleep — though the suns shall rise and set,
O, *longer* than Rip Van Winkle!

TWO LITTLE SEXTONS.

TWO Little Sextons, is your pretty trade
Its own reward? I fancy it may be
For love of making graves that graves are made
Under the quiet of that thorny tree,
Whose very thorns to-day were sharply laid
To rest beside the blue faint flowers you found
And hurried back into their native ground.

Two Little Sextons, yellow of hair, I fear
There have been burials of butterflies,
Sudden and secret — many a time this year.

Ah, brave confession! — merrily one replies,
With young light logic, very fair to hear:
"We had to kill them, for they would not die,
So they could turn to angels in the sky."

SEEKING THE KEY-FLOWER.

"TAKE what you will — do not forgot the best."

So runs the fairy legend all way read.
Let's search the glimmering East, the glittering West.
Let's search the North, and search the South indeed,
Until we find the key-flower — or its seed.

Let's never mind the treasure — what of it?
Men sometimes hate each other for the gold,
And women love each other not a whit
The better for the diamonds, I am told.
Make haste, for soon we have our hands to fold.

Where does it grow ? — And then where *does* it grow ?
Somewhere — or anywhere. In clefts of ice,
Or dews of our own woods, for all I know ;
On broken towers ; in islands sick with spice ;
And — surely on the hills of Paradise.

IN-DOOR AND OUT-DOOR FORTUNES.

PICTURES of trees they have, you see,
With leaves that never fade or fall;
But can he climb the picture of a tree
Upon his father's wall?
Or find a bird there that can sing,
A blossom that smells sweet,
A wind that will go up and fling
The nuts down at his feet?

They have their pictures of the sun,
At rise and setting, somewhat bright,
Painted in gold, for gold, yet every one
Is — imitation light!

The one true sun, that shines on you,
(And many worlds, they say,)
From God's own sky, so good and blue,
Is worth them all to-day.

Roses they have, the winter through —
But do the roses love the snows ?
The rose that waits till May and gets the dew
Must be the happier rose.
There, let his mother's diamonds be —
He never sees them shine.
You've all the stars in Heaven to see,
And all the stars are mine.

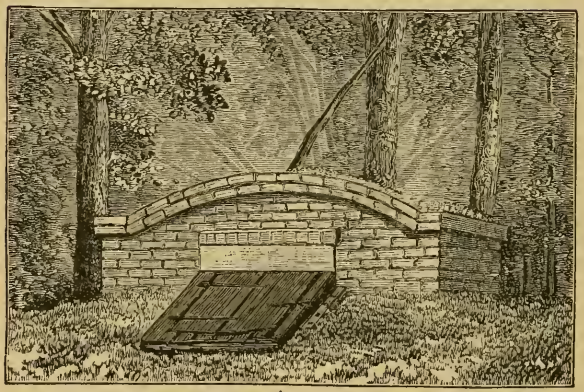
A PRESIDENT AT HOME.*

I PASSED a President's House to-day ——
"A President, mamma, and what is that?"
Oh, it is a man who has to stay
Where bowing beggars hold out the hat
For something — a man who has to be
The Captain of every ship that we
Send with our darling flag to the sea —
The Colonel at home who has to command
Each marching regiment in the land.

This President now has a single room,
That is low and not much lighted, I fear;

* At North Bend, Ohio River — the tomb of General Harrison.

Yet the butterflies play in the sun and gloom
Of his evergreen avenue, year by year;
And the child-like violets up the hill
Climb, faintly wayward, about him still;
And the bees blow by at the wind's wide will;
And the cruel river, that drowns men so,
Looks pretty enough in the shadows below.



Just one little fellow (named Robin) was there,
In a red Spring vest, and he let me pass

With that charming-careless, high-bred air
Which comes of serving the great. In the grass
He sat, half-singing, with nothing to do ——
No, I did not see the President too:
His door was locked (what I say is true),
And he was asleep, and has been, it appears,
Like Rip Van Winkle, asleep for years!

SOMETHING WANTED.

BUT hush one minute, and tell me why
It is so pleasant to stand and cry.

There is something you want? Ah, that is true.
There is something *I* want. Shall I cry with you?

What do *I* want? Why, the first Spring rose.
And the world is white with the whirl of snows,

What do *I* want? Oh, a nightingale,
To die for the rose — in a fairy tale.

But away and away, where I cannot go,
Are the bud and the bird that I want, you know.

And away and away, on a palace wall,
Is a picture I want — and that is not all.

What do *I* want ? Why, there is a vase,
And here is a shawl, and look at this lace.

If I stand and cry for them (don't you see ?)
Oh, wouldn't the little boys laugh at me !

Yet the thing I want the most is one
That Solomon said was under the sun :

It is — nothing new ! But it cannot be found
In all the grass that is on the ground.

And never a ship that sails the sea
Could bring what I want the most to me.

And never a wing that searches the air
Could touch the thing that is sweetest there.

Because and because — it *is* in the sky,
Away and away: so I stand and cry.

MY BABES IN THE WOOD.

I KNOW a story, fairer, dimmer, sadder,
Than any story painted in your books,
You are so glad? It will not make you gladder;
Yet listen, with your pretty restless looks.

"Is it a Fairy Story?" Well, half fairy—
At least it dates far back as fairies do,
And seems to me as beautiful and airy;
Yet half, perhaps the fairy half, is true.

You had a baby sister and a brother,
(Two very dainty people, rosily white,

Each sweeter than all things except the other!)
Older yet younger — gone from human sight!

And I, who loved them, and shall love them ever,
And think with yearning tears how each light hand
Crept toward bright bloom or berries — I shall never
Know how I lost them. Do you understand?

Poor slightly golden heads! I think I missed them
First, in some dreamy, piteous, doubtful way;
But when and where with lingering lips I kissed them,
My gradual parting, I can never say.

Sometimes I fancy that they may have perished
In shadowy quiet of wet rocks and moss,
Near paths whose very pebbles I have cherished,
For their small sakes, since my most lovely loss.

I fancy, too, that they were softly covered
By robins, out of apple-flowers they knew,
Whose nursing wings in far home sunshine hovered,
Before the timid world had dropped the dew.

Their names were — what yours are! At this you wonder.
Their pictures are — your own, as you have seen;
And my bird-buried darlings, hidden under
Lost leaves — why, it is your dead selves I mean!

A GHOST.

I KNOW that I have heard the laugh of one,
Ah, many a time this morning in the sun,
And seen its very face look down at me
Above the bird's nest in this apple-tree,

It does not know — how should it know? — how still
A grave lies in the dew below the hill,
Where eyes too like its own can never see
How full of tears the violets there can be.

HOLDING THE WORLD.

HOW could Atlas hold it? (Oh,
Strange he did not spill the sea!)
Other men not giants, though,
Have to hold it now, as he
Held it years and years ago.

Other men, if they are wise,
Turn it round and round and see
Blossoms, birds and butterflies;
They're the merry men for me —
Just such men as you will be.

Other men, who do not know
What a rose or robin's worth,
Hold a weight of rocks and snow,
Hold a tiresome weight of earth,
Hold dead trees when leaves should blow.

Take the world, then, as a ball —
Toss it lightly to and fro :
Laugh and flush ; and, if it fall,
You can fold your hands and go
When they're empty — that is all.

HIS SHARE AND MINE.

HE went from me so softly and so soon.
His sweet hands rest at morning and at noon;

The only task God gave them was to hold
A few faint rose-buds — and be white and cold.

His share of flowers he took with him away;
No more will blossom here so fair as they.

His share of thorns he left — and, if they tear
My hands instead of his, I do not care.

His sweet eyes were so clear and lovely, but
To look into the world's wild light and shut:

Down in the dust they have their share of sleep;
Their share of tears is left for me to weep.

His sweet mouth had its share of kisses — Oh!
What love, what anguish, will he ever know?

Its share of thirst, and murmuring, and moan
And cries unsatisfied, shall be my own.

He had his share of Summer. Bird and dew
Were here with him — with him they vanished too.

His share of dying leaves, and rains, and frost,
I take, with every dreary thing he lost.

The phantom of the cloud he did not see
For evermore shall overshadow me.

He, in turn, with small, still, snowy feet,
Touched the Dim Path, and made its Twilight
sweet.

A WALK TO MY OWN GRAVE.

[WITH THREE CHILDREN.]

THERE! do not stop to cry.
"The path is long? — we walk so slow?"
But we shall get there bye and bye.
Every step that we go
Is one step nearer, you know:
And your mother's grave will be
Such a pretty place to see.

"Will there be marble there,
With doves, or lambs, or lilies?" No.
Keep white yourselves. Why should you care

If they *are* as white as snow,
When the lilies can not blow,
And the doves can never moan,
Nor the lambs bleat — in the stone?

You want some *flowers?* Oh!
We shall not find them on the way.
Only a few brier-roses grow,
Here and there, in the sun, I say.
It is dusty and dry all day,
But at evening there is shade,
And — you will not be afraid?

Ah, the *flowers?* Surely, yes.
At the end there will be a few.
"Violets? Violets?" So I guess,
And a little grass and dew;
And some birds — you want them *blue?*

And a spring, too, as I think,
Where we will rest and drink.

Now kiss me and be good,
For you can go back home and play.
This is my grave here in the wood,
Where I, for a while, must stay.
Wait — will you always pray,
Though you *are* sleepy, at night?
There! do not forget *me* — quite.

Keep the baby sweetly drest,
And give him milk and give him toys;
Rock him, as I did, to his rest,
And never make any noise,
Brown-eyed girl and blue-eyed boys,
Until he wakes. Good-by,
And — do not stop to cry!

EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS, ETC.,

REFERRING TO

MRS. PIATT'S POEMS ABOUT CHILDREN.

"She has a special gift of seeing into a child's heart, and all of her Songs to or concerning little ones are full of the heaven which lies about us in our infancy." — E. C. STEDMAN (author of "The Victorian Poets") in *N. Y. Evening Post.*

"There are many little poems about children in the book, and all are marked by delicate thoughtfulness, and half-sad, half-playful grace; and they are all different from other poems about children." — W. D. HOWELLS in the *Independent.*

"One of MRS. PIATT'S peculiarities is the perfectly natural way in which she allows the talk of children to come into her verses. Children in poetry are usually as stiff and amazing as children on the stage . . . but the voices of MRS. PIATT'S children are forever interrupting her descant with chirpings like those of May birds, with remarks idly profound, and questions so exasperating in their artless difficulty that they at once carry conviction that they are real." — Miss H. W. PRESTON in *Boston Advertiser.*

"'The End of the Rainbow,' and 'The Little Stockings,' will never die so long as loving mothers exist." — *Louisville Courier-Journal.*

"We have been specially taken by her poems about children." — E. P. WHIPPLE in *Boston Globe.*


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